

4-20-1997

Concert: Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Ithaca College Wind Ensemble

Mark Fonder

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*"It is
my plan
to build
a school
of music
second
to none."*

—William
Grant Egbert
(1867–1928)
Founder,
Ithaca
Conservatory
of Music

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

ITHACA

ITHACA COLLEGE WIND ENSEMBLE
Mark Fonder, conductor

Suite of Old American Dances (1947)

Robert Russell Bennett
(1894-1981)

Cakewalk
Schottische
Western One-Step
Wallflower Waltz
Rag

The Washington Post (1889)

John Philip Sousa
(1854-1932)

The Thunderer (1886)

John Philip Sousa

The Fairest of The Fair (1908)

John Philip Sousa

Hands Across the Sea (1899)

John Philip Sousa

INTERMISSION

Symphony on Themes of Sousa (1995)

Ira Hearshen
(b. 1947)

Moderato-Molto Allegro after "Washington Post"

Largamente after "The Thunderer"

Scherzo after "The Fairest of the Fair"

Allegro Non Troppo after "Hands Across the Sea"

The Stars and Stripes Forever (1896)

John Philip Sousa

Ford Hall Auditorium
Sunday, April 20, 1997
3:00 p.m.

About the Program

Exactly one century ago this spring, a new march was premiered by the Sousa Band during its East Coast tour. Sources are vague as to precisely when the initial hearing of "The Stars and Stripes Forever" occurred. Some say it was used as one of many encores performed while the band was touring somewhere in Vermont. Others point to a concert on May 17, 1897 at the Philadelphia Academy of Music where President William McKinley was among the audience members. Regardless, Sousa remembered exactly when he wrote the march. In his autobiography, *Marching Along*: Sousa recalls:

Aboard the *Teutonic*, as it steamed out of the harbor on my return from Europe in 1896, came one of the most vivid incidents of my career. As I paced the deck, absorbed in thought, suddenly I began to sense the rhythmic beat of a band playing within my brain. It kept on ceaselessly, playing, playing, playing. Throughout the whole tense voyage, that imaginary band continued to unfold the same themes, echoing and reechoing the most distinct melody. I did not transfer a note of that music to paper while I was on the steamer, but when we reached shore, on Christmas day, I set the measures that my brain-band had been playing for me, and not a note of it has changed. The composition is known as "The Stars and Stripes Forever" and is probably my most popular march.

In celebration of Sousa's three-minute 45 second-long masterpiece, this year has seen a number of anniversary performances, including unlikely places like Mir, the Russian space station. The Ithaca College Wind Ensemble celebrates Sousa's legendary march by performing a work of symphonic proportions based on four of Sousa's favorite marches. First premiered in 1995 by the Air Combat Command Heritage of America Band of Langley Air Force Base, Virginia conducted by Col. Lowell Graham, Ira Hearshen's *Symphony on Themes of Sousa* has quickly been embraced as one of the repertoire's most important works. A massive score of some 345 pages over four movements attests to Hearshen's high admiration for the venerable composer. For this concert, Sousa's original marches will serve as "preludes" to the symphony. (Think of them as musical "strings around your finger" to remind you of Sousa's unendingly tuneful themes.) This, at the suggestion of Frederick Fennell, is in order "to better enjoy the extended symphonic offering Hearshen provides."

About Ira Hearshen

Ira Hearshen received his Bachelor of Music degree in applied theory and composition from Wayne State University. In 1972, he moved to Los Angeles to study orchestration at the Grove School of Music and under the tutelage of the film composer Albert Harris. He also studied counterpoint under Allyn Ferguson. Hearshen has many arrangements to his credit including the Detroit Symphony Pine Knob Summer Series, the Summer Pops Series for John Denver with various symphonies, the Jacksonville (FL) Symphony and the Air Combat Heritage Band. He is currently one of the most sought after orchestrators in Hollywood. His orchestrations include music for the television series *Beauty and the Beast*, the Broadway show *Into the Light*, and feature films *Guarding Tess* and *The Three Musketeers*.

On Writing a Sousa Symphony Ira Hearshen

Stirred and fascinated by the music of John Philip Sousa since childhood, I still get a chill upon hearing the piccolo obligato in the trio of "The Stars and Stripes Forever." While the thought of transforming popular march music into a legitimate piece for concert stage had a lot of intellectual appeal, I feared that any attempt I made to pay homage to Sousa would be misunderstood. But artistic challenge won out and I started working on what was to become the second movement of the symphony in the winter of 1990-91.

I began this piece by taking the 'trio' theme from the march, "The Thunderer," slowing it down to a tempo of 48 beats per minute and casting it in the style of the Finale of Mahler's third symphony.

From the audience reaction to the first performance, I knew I was involved with something unusual in the realm of band music. The weight of the piece and its 8-minute time performance meant that the idea of a light concert suite of 4 to 6 movements as originally commissioned was out of the question. It was at this time I realized that I had the beginning of a full-scale symphony in both length and depth.

I began to envision this work as a four movement symphony classically constructed. It would have a first movement written in 'sonata-allegro' form, a slow movement, a scherzo and a finale. Each of the four sections would be based on a different Sousa march and the outer movements must be at least twice as long as the internal two so that the work would have integrity of true symphonic form.

There were two other problems that had to be solved: each movement had to be playable as a separate piece, and there needed to be some unifying melodic material that could bring four different Sousa marches together. I found the solution in Sousa's scores. There was a 4 note melodic fragment common to virtually every tune I wanted to use, the same four notes that begin the "Dies Irae" portion of the Catholic Requiem Mass. The intervals are a minor second down, a minor second up, followed by a minor third down. This melodic motive occurs in the trios of both "Hands Across the Sea" as well as in the introduction to "Fairest of the Fair." In fact, these are the first four notes one hears in "The Stars and Stripes Forever."

I used this 4 note Sousa "signature" to introduce and end the symphony, in the construction of the scherzo, and to create the finale. The coda of the last movement became extended as a prologue to the entire symphony preceding the first movement. Thus, the symphony became a unified cyclical work.

Sousa's melodies are all strong and of a wide variety of architectural styles. They range from the complex ("Hands Across the Sea") to simple (Washington Post") and all are stirring, intense, and above all, really fun to listen to. This is what makes Sousa's music "classic." I hope listeners have as much of an adventure listening to this as I did putting it together.

ITHACA COLLEGE WIND ENSEMBLE

Mark Fonder, conductor

Flute/Piccolo

Jaimie Chester*
Ann Denney
Karyn Massi
Nicole McPherson
Yuko Yamamoto

Oboe/English Horn

Erin Finn
Keri McCarthy*
Joanne Nelson

Bassoon

Gregory Crystal
Suzanne Snyder*

E-Flat Clarinet

Tiffany Twitchell

Clarinet

Deb Bianchi*
Karen Brown
Jennifer Cadieux
Crescent Lonnquist
Emily Rider
Joleen Walas

Bass Clarinet

Elizabeth Feck

Saxophone

Garry Helbock
Stacie Lucynski
Jeff Saunders*
Michael Walls

Cornet/Trumpet

Mark Giralamo
George Glikos
Alex Meixner
Matt Oram
Brian Pitt*
Aaron Velardi

Horn

Joseph Caminiti
Kate Cocks
John DeGiglio
Amy Sanchez
Anna Thomas*

Trombone

Tracy Burke
Kate Donnelly
Benji Osborne

Euphonium

Dave Seibert
Eric Spinelli

Tuba

Richard Denton*
Andrew Tobin

Double Bass

Michael Ward

Piano

Siew Lan Sung

Timpani

Marc Whitman

Percussion

Jaimie Bernstein
Jeremy Friedman
Brian Hibbard
Emily Lemmerman*
Dan Meunier

Graduate Assistant

Mark Babbitt

* denotes section principal

Members of the Wind Ensemble have been listed alphabetically
to emphasize the rotation of parts within some sections
and the importance of each individual.